

## Will You Miss Being Taken in the First Rapture?

by C. Gordon Wolcott

Jesus said He is coming in a day or hour which you do not understand. To those not ready, His coming will be as a thief in the night. Those not ready will not be part of the “watch” in which He will come and they will miss Him. Mt. 24:42-45. To be alert to the hour of His coming requires getting ready. Readiness requires preparation. Besides understanding, one should also do some things before He comes. Or, as Jesus said, you will miss the event. The Bible also says the children of Light will not be surprised. 1Thess. 5:2-6. Here, Light describes those being enlightened, with facts clearly in mind. If they are not surprised, those must previously have been in possession of true facts on what He will find acceptable at the time of His coming.

Can there be any other reading of these passages? Read them again carefully, and then associate them with Amos 3:7, Mk. 4:22 and Jhn. 16:4. It is not the Lord who keeps man in the dark about anything He is about to do. In order not to miss out on the event and the concurrent events of His coming, one should involve himself. For adequate preparation he should accurately gather the truths enabling qualification prior to the time of His coming. He says we surely can! Deut. 30:14.

How many of these Christ-spoken facts do Christians know? How many work hard to better understand more of them? Understanding is different than being aware. How is adequate preparation completed? Anyone “just resting in the Lord,” anyone “just trusting in Jesus,” or “just loving Him,” will surely miss Him. Actual truths He taught must be applied, in order not to miss Him. Would an instructive example be useful?

Perhaps you recall that John the Baptist described himself as the voice in the wilderness, preparing people for the Lord's coming. He did a good job. It was John the Baptist who subsequently introduced the Lamb of God. He was very accurate in recognizing the beginning. Surely he should have had possession of the necessary facts; surely he should have known much about the Lord's coming. Jhn. 1:23-24. But do you realize that although John knew His assignment, ultimately he was deficient in understanding enough of the facts concerning the Lord's purpose at His coming?

You have read that he sent two of his disciples to further investigate this Jesus. Why did He refuse to keep God's "promise" to use His mighty power to neutralize and terminate Rome's rule over the Holy Land – for all time? Seemingly, this Jesus was refusing to set up His Kingdom on earth, as prophesied. Could He really be the promised Savior of the Chosen People? John stumbled over what he saw, because he had preconceived ideas derived from what the priests and theologians had taught. Lk. 7:18-23. John stumbled because he could not recognize the "day" he saw, and he missed out on deliverance from prison. He literally lost his head over what he thought he should be seeing.

What preconceived ideas of the Lord's actions at His second coming are in your own mind? Will they match what He taught about His coming? Or are they derived from the teachings of ministers and theologians who have received their information from other ministers and other theologians? Remember that both Daniel and the Apostle John were instructed to "seal up" certain previews given them so that there would not be full revealing until the end of the age in which we live. Dan. 12:4, Rev. 10:4. How could some of our fathers and their fathers be so sure they knew so much about the time and the manner of our Lord's coming? That is only now being

revealed within and to the generation which shall not pass away before all these things prophesied are completed. Mt. 24:33-34. Only man's inventiveness has made so much "knowledge" available previous to about 1930. It failed. Because of preconceived notions, most people will miss the coming of the Lord. Will you?

How often the Lord emphasized dangers in Satan- devised traps! The ways of God were well known in the days of Noah. Adam had died only about 126 years before Noah was born and only about 14 years had elapsed from the death of Seth. Noah was born only 69 years after Enoch was translated. Methuselah lived as a contemporary with Adam about 242 years; he was a contemporary of Noah about 600 years. It was a time when relatively few men populated the land. The knowledge of God's requirements was readily available through a plurality of human sources. However, not being coordinated with God's ways, most men, except Noah and seven others, missed preservation in the boat – a type of Christ.

During the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, the ways of God were not hidden. Abram was born about 60 years before Noah died, and Abram's life was contemporary with that of Noah's son, Shem, during 210 years. Lot was also contemporary with Shem. Isaac was contemporary with Shem during 110 years. But of all people living in the fertile valley of Sodom, only Lot and his family knew enough about God's requirements to pull away – and preserve their lives. As a young man, Joseph received visions from God describing his family's inter- relationships. The family had other views, and totally missed what God was doing. As a result, wheat harvests were poor and they left the Promised Land. During the Exodus wilderness travels, the Chosen People insisted on following their own ideas, instead of what God was showing and doing through Moses. The whole adult generation missed preservation in the Promised Land – except for two who prefigured two groups and the Rev. 11 two witnesses in our time.

Although much warning and exhortation was given the Hebrew people prior to the victories of the Assyrian and then the Babylonian armies, the Hebrews stuck to their own ideas and lost even what they had. The church-nation of the Jewish people had all the information needed, and more than it wished to use about the timing and work which their Messiah would undertake. The priests and learned men could tell Herod, a Gentile, when and precisely where the Messiah would be born. But because of preconditioned notions of Christ's coming and the work of His ministry, they willfully missed taking part in His Kingdom. They said Jesus was an anti-Christ, an outgrowth of Satan. Man-organized Christendom has long held to its own opinions and views of what Jesus is doing to form His Glorious Church on earth, full of power and with no blemish. Eph. 5:27. Because of that, Christendom failed to cooperate and has a lame, ineffective part in building the Kingdom Christ came to establish on earth. Further, all in Christendom adhering to its man-conditioned ideas will yet miss any function in the heavenly New Jerusalem Kingdom.

What is necessary to ensure enlightenment by which one can make himself ready for the Lord's coming? One reason for His first coming was to bring the gift of His immortal seed for immediate preservation from death of the human soul. Ro. 6:23, 1Pet. 1:23. He intended that would then initiate a process leading to inner Kingdom rule and then physical immortality on earth. Jhn. 6:49-51, Heb. 9:28. However, when He comes the second time, it will be not to deal with either sin or man's total preservation. He comes to lift all who are prepared into glorified heavenly Kingdom status in the New Jerusalem above (Rev. 12:5) and to put the rest of the world back on the course rejected during His first coming. When He comes again, He will bring wages for work accomplished. Rev. 22:12. When He comes again, it will be to shake down and pulverize into "dust" everything not pure and having God as its source. Heb. 12:26-29, Dan. 2:35.

A reward is different than a gift. A reward is paid only to those proven worthy to receive, having earned it. Therefore, after granting the gift of preservation for the soul, God's plan moves on into the preparation phase so that the one preparing may become ready and worthy to stand in His presence – before He comes. Lk. 21:36. He will reward and recompense those who have worked and sacrificed to make themselves ready. Man's initiative in responding, man's cooperation in working out the Lord's plan, is the only way provided toward adequately earning the prize of the heavenly calling. Phil. 3:13-17. But there can be no timely and objective cooperation at all, without adequate specific and accurate knowledge of God's requirements for qualification. What are you doing now to gain this specific and accurate knowledge of His righteous requirements and how and when He will reveal Himself? What is being done to prepare for it?

Transmission of specific and accurate knowledge requires teaching. Jesus said the Holy Spirit will teach all things – and that is true. But we also need to note the manner of His teaching. The Holy Spirit will teach and guide in (clarify) only what has been spoken by the Christ-Spirit (Old and New Testament) – as all the Word of God is being studied and compared within itself. Jhn. 14:26, 16:13, Mt. 4:4. Always in the Record, God has chosen to bring His teaching through the mouths of men who are His specially chosen vessels, those who have made themselves available exclusively to the Lord's training. Isaiah was such a vessel; the Apostles were trained to be such vessels. Of course, those men were not the only vessels chosen to bring illumination on how to become ready and worthy through cooperation. Nor has the Lord withheld His vessels or His illumination in this final decade of the Church Age. Nevertheless, most church groups still fearfully refuse association with "controversial" teaching on how the Lord will bring about His work of consummating all that the Prophets have spoken throughout the ages. Acts. 3:21. Very few, though the number is

growing, have begun to take interest in associating current events with Bible prophecy. A few of the few are motivated by desire to know so as to cooperate in the Lord's work and become prepared and useful. Others are motivated by intellectual curiosity, to learn what is going to happen, just for the sake of knowing.

If you are among those receiving teaching of the Faith from the Word of the Lord, you now know there is more in His plan than soul preservation and more than a subsequent Holy Spirit Baptism. In that case, you may be motivated to go far beyond that "nursing infant" stage and on toward maturity. Heb. 5:11-14, 6:1-3. Eph. 4:12-13. Christ has provided the way, but the way is the Lord's way and not man's way. It is needful to home in on the Lord's requirements for qualifying and it is necessary to have been cooperating prior to His coming again among men. There are no acceptable substitutes.

It is fruitless to learn and accept the man-developed opinion pervading Christendom about what is acceptable to the Lord when He comes. It is fruitless because that faith is not at all the Faith presented by Christ. Lk. 18:8. All of religious man's brainwashing taken in has to be blasted out and removed before the Lord's Truth can replace it. Blasting and removal is painful – almost unbearable for some. Those who would prepare may have to make painful decisions.

Will you continue in Christendom's presentation of (and in teaching it, for that matter) the alleged requirements of Jesus Christ? Is a claimed "born again" status sufficient? Or will you freshly learn about His new and strange (not as expected) work – differing in all aspects from traditions of man – and learn only through the revealing of Jesus Christ? Isa. 28:21-24, 43:18-19. The question is not whether you should engage in preparation. It is vital

for pleasing the Lord, because He yearns to give out His rewards. The question is how to go about preparing. Man's traditions always lead one way. The revelations of Jesus Christ lead another way.

In the period preceding His first coming, the traditions of man became the stumbling block for almost the whole Jewish nation. Only a few hundred out of several millions were willing to accept even a portion of what our Lord was offering. The pattern is true. Today in the period preceding His second coming, the traditions of man have become the stumbling block for multitudes. Again, leaders in tradition have themselves refused to enter into the fulness of God's Truth and have obstinately prevented multitudes from entering in. Lk. 11:52.

How important it becomes for all people living in this decade of the 1990s to learn what God Himself has said. How important it becomes to back away completely from all doctrine of man-chosen teachers – and permit God to teach new and fresh from His sound foundation.

Once more He will shake all things. "Once more" indicates the final removal of that which can be shaken, all that does not have its source in God. Only that which can not be shaken will be able to stand. Heb. 12:26-29. No person, no person at all, lacking prior and adequate preparation, readiness and worthiness will be able to stand and overcome the unimaginable, unthinkable, intolerable pressures now mounting to engulf every nation and every individual not adequately prepared.

Preparation under the teaching of the Lord will be fruitful. There is blessing in studying, teaching and conforming to the whole Word of God. In the Book of Revelation is a special and noteworthy statement not occurring in

any other Book.

“Blessed are those who read aloud with comment the Word of this prophecy. Blessed are those who hear it and who obey it, for the time is near (once these things begin). Rev. 1:3, 22:10, Jhn. 14:21.

How can any thinking person neglect such specific admonition to prepare for the time and manner of the Lord’s coming? The title of the Book means revealing or unveiling. To the wise, it is the unique unveiling of God’s end-time work.

The man who either ignores the call or refuses to cooperate with the end-time unveiling will surely miss the Lord’s coming. Without change of heart and mind, he will be unable to stand through 3.5 years of “shaking.” But to him who refuses the tradition of man and accepts full revealing from the Lord Jesus, there is strengthening into invulnerability. In the midst of terrible pressures and environment of intolerable anguish man is now swiftly bringing upon himself, the overcoming one will be as a spectator – it cannot touch him. Mt. 24:21-22, Lk. 21:25- 26, Ps. 91:1-10. In the world, men will have tribulation, but in Christ, not a touch of tribulation. Jhn. 16:31.

How is the Lord calling to you? Are you actively engaged in preparation? Will you adhere to comfortable traditions of religious man, or do you insist on preparing exclusively within Jesus Christ’s current prophetic revelations, as confirmed by His whole Word? Both approaches are available. Will you know when He is coming? Will you know precisely how He is coming to put down the foolishness of man and establish His Kingdom? If you know and conform, you will meet Him as He comes. If you “know” something

different, you will miss Him – as a householder who belatedly discovers a thief was there.

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Preparation is not so much having well developed religious skills, but is more in having learned to trust the Lord in “impossible” situations – all of them.